

## A Letter Written by Dr. Nansen, the Arctic Explorer.

Progress of One of the Latest Expeditions Organized for the Purpose of Exploring the North Pole and Exploring the Extreme North.

Dr. Nansen, the Arctic explorer, has written a letter to the London Times, which will probably be the last he will have an opportunity to send to Europe before he is caught in the ice which he hopes will drift him across the polar regions. The letter is dated at Yagor strait, which separates the European mainland from Waiyatch island at the south of Novaya Zemlin. He wrote August 2. He says of his little vessel, the Fram, which he built specially to withstand ice pressure.

"The Fram is a splendid ship for ice. Local reading after between the floors as a boat. I have already given me many a glad moment when I have seen from the crow's nest how well she behaves and how strong she is. With a feeling of safety I let her quietly run with full speed in between the big, heavy floes; she breaks them under with almost no shaking, no sound in the vessel herself."

Months before Nansen sailed he sent a man hundreds of miles into western Siberia to get thirty of their best sled dogs that were to be found and to deliver them at Yagor strait in July. Dogs are an important feature of Nansen's plans and it was regarded as a matter of so much consequence that the man succeeded in his mission that King Oscar had a gold medal struck to give to him if he fulfilled the duty. He was on the ground with thirty-five dogs when Nansen arrived.

"My man, Tronheim, went to the Ostians on the river Sotva, where the best sled dogs in western Siberia are to be had. There he bought fifty dogs, as he thought some of them might be lost on the way, and he was certainly right, as five have died by various accidents. From the Sotva river he traveled over the Siberian tundra, then through the Ural mountains, then over the vast plains again until he came here with the sled dogs, traveling at last with the sledges over the bare ground, over grass and stones, as is the custom here, where they travel with sledges and reindeer in the summer as well as in the winter. Tronheim has carried out his task very well and as a reward he will get the gold medal of King Oscar, which I have brought with me for him. Now it only rests with us to make good use of the dogs. They are nice-looking animals, white, black and gray, and with pointed noses and standing ears, good tempered, and easy to manage. Not against strange dogs they are furious; they almost killed a Samoyed dog which they held of the other day; it would have been torn to pieces had I not saved the poor creature."

When Nansen wrote his last letter, a sailing vessel that was to replenish his stock of coal, had not arrived, and he was in much anxiety because unless she came soon he would be compelled to start with the coal he had in order to get through the Kara sea and pass along the coast of Asia before the new ice should form.

In his steam launch he made a short reconnaissance in the Kara sea, and everything seemed favorable for an easy passage. He said of his further plans:

"My present intention is to steer eastward along the Siberian coast until we reach the mouth of the Ob river, west of the Lena delta. I shall keep as near as possible to the coast wherever there is much ice, as there is generally more open water along the coast than in the ice. If there is time and a good opportunity should offer itself I shall go into the mouth of the Ob, as some twenty-six other dogs are waiting for us there. As the sled dogs from eastern Siberia are generally known to be better than the western Siberia ones, Baron Toll, the Siberian traveler, who is now in Siberia, proposed to me to let some dogs wait for us there too, so that if I should happen to pass I may take them."

A small expedition has also been sent to the island of Kotelny, the most western of the New Siberian islands. On this island the depot of provisions will be left, one on the northwest coast and one on the southwest coast. It is on Baron Toll's proposal that these stores and provisions are arranged there. As he says, they can do no harm, but it is not probable that we shall want them. Nobody knows, however, what might happen, and had De Long of the Jeannette expedition had some such stores of provisions on the New Siberian islands the expedition would not have had such a sad fate, and I think Toll is right.

"After having passed the Olenok river we shall go northward along the west coast of the New Siberian islands as far as we can in open water. I hope to be there by the beginning of September. It may be that we shall meet with unknown land or islands to the northwest of Kotelny, and possibly there may be open water along the coasts there. If so I shall of course use it as best I can. But when we get no further there is nothing left except to let the Fram get best in the ice and be carried along northward or north-westward by the current, which, according to my opinion, must run in that direction in those regions."

**The Meaning of "Closure."**  
This word about which we are hearing so much came into legislative use in the British house of commons in 1887, and is applied to a rule which cuts off debate and prevents further discussion or motion by the minority, bringing the question to a direct and conclusive vote. The French word *cloture* is often employed to express the same thing. It is really an emphatic and decisive way of saying: "Come! we have talked enough about this matter; we must decide it now."

**Average Height of Men.**  
According to Topinard the average height of Laplanders is 69.7 inches; of Bushmen, 62; of Chinese, 64; of Frenchmen, 65; of Russians, 65.4; of Germans, 66.2; of Danes, 66.3; of Irishmen, 67; of Englishmen, 67.5; of Swedes, 67.4; of American Indians, 68.2; of Patagonians, 70.8.

## THE HEIDELBERG TUN OUTDOOR.

A Cask Made at Munich Which Keeps It Out of Sight.

That monster wine vat, the famous "tun" of Heidelberg, which we have been taught from childhood to consider the most gigantic receptacle for liquid ever made of wood and bound with iron hoops, has at last, says the St. Louis Republic, been revealed in the shape of a giant cask built for the Blatter Brewing company of Munich. The old Heidelberg tun was built during the three years ending with 1591. It was composed of oak beams each 6 inches square and 27 feet long, and had a diameter of over 18 feet. The figures for the exact weights are wanting, but the item, which tells us that the iron of the hoops alone weighed 11,000 pounds is quite suggestive of the great weight of the vat. Nearly 200 years after the first tun was built a second, of much greater proportions, was constructed. Heidelberg tun No. 2 was 36 feet long and 24 feet in diameter and had a capacity of 500 hogsheads. In 1836 Strutton & Co., the London brewers, constructed a beer vat at their works in Nuremberg which was 90 feet in diameter and 34 feet deep. The day this stupendous affair was finished the brewing company gave a dinner to 700 customers, all of whom were comfortably seated in the vat.

The Blatter cask, but recently finished, is 105 feet in diameter and 34 feet deep. It was inaugurated with a ball in which 275 couples took part, and at one time, it is said, there were 500 people on the floor of the cask, not counting the waiters, musicians, etc. Beside the above, no inconsiderable floor space was taken up by the stage erected for the orchestra, the two pianos and fine dining table.

## LUCY HOOPER'S LAST LETTER.

Her Farewell to Her Readers in Anticipation of Her Speedy Death.

Two days before the death of Lucy H. Hooper, which occurred a few weeks ago in Paris, she dictated the following letter to the Philadelphia Telegraph, with which paper she had long corresponded:

"And now, my kind and patient readers, I must stop and lay down my pen forever. By the time these lines appear the author, who has dictated them to her amanuensis and dear daughter, will be called beyond the stars. In January I would have celebrated my silver wedding with professional literature, but the fates have decided it otherwise and I must say farewell. Other engagements have changed and varied, but the Evening Telegraph has been constant for eighteen years, during which time I never missed a week in sending my letter. It was always a vision of mine to return one day to my own dear city, Philadelphia, to see old friends and old places, like many other aspirations in this world, that one was destined to be fulfilled. To my dear, and loyal, and firm friend, Mr. Wardour, whose kindness to me and mine has been unflinching and untiring, and to my many friends in Philadelphia, and to the good people who have read my letters, and though not acquainted with me personally have written me kind letters and spoken of me kindly, to my dear old home, I say farewell. Every one has been kind to me and mine has been a happy life, but it is ended now; like Tiny Tim in the 'Christmas Carol,' I can only say, God bless us every one."

## DENTISTRY IN PARIS.

Tooth Carpenters There is a Great Refuge for Quacks and Impositors.

It is within living memory, says the New York Evening Post, that the dentists who lived in Paris, were what was called "arracheurs de dents," or tooth drawers, who had chairs on the Champs Elysees, in which they extracted teeth in the presence of large crowds. It was the popular belief that, in order to support their proclamation that the operation was painless, as soon as the dentist got his pin-cure fixed on the tooth, he whispered in the patient's ear, "Gonville! If you make the faintest squeak, I'll break your jaw!" The arrival of the American dentists, forty years ago, gradually banished these worthless from the public view, and gave dentistry the rank of a profession, and made its processes more humane and scientific. But dentistry is still in France a great refuge for quacks and impositors, as there is no proper legal control of the art and no diploma required for the practice of it. A writer in the Temps, speaking of this, says: "What he went recently to a dentist in a small town to get relief from a toothache. The operator had been highly recommended to him as very skillful. When he saw him, however, he recognized him as a retired gendarme whom he had long known. 'Where did you learn dentistry?' he inquired. Seizing his pliers, the ex-gendarme replied: 'With this, monsieur, there is no need of study. It is a beautiful instrument. When it once takes hold the tooth has to come or the jaw gives away. Sit down and I'll show you.' The sufferer promptly fled."

## A Four-Story Tunnel.

M. Hanemann, a well-known Russian engineer, laid before the minister of public works at St. Petersburg recently a plan of tunneling the Neva. According to the Revue Francaise the tunnel is to be circular, its diameter being 12 m. and its length 125 m. Altogether the tunnel would make a semicircle that under the Thames. M. Hanemann intends a four-story construction, the upper one containing ducts for electric wires; the second contains a passageway for pedestrians; the third a wagon road, and the fourth to be used for rapid electric transit.

## Telephones in Sweden.

In no other country of the world is the telephone in so general use as in Sweden, and in no other is the service so cheap and at the same time so perfect. Under government control and the rates are fixed by the government. A few weeks ago a new line was opened between Stockholm and Christiania by King Oscar, who took occasion to express the hope in the first message to the Norwegians that the line would tend to draw the two countries into closer union and aid in overcoming the desire of the Norwegian radicals to break up the existing relations. It is now proposed, by means of a submarine cable, to connect the Norwegian and Swedish capitals with Copenhagen.

## A BATTLE ROYAL.

Single Tiger Engaged in a Fight to the Death.

A bloody battle occurred at Roger Williams park, Providence, R. I., just before noon a few days ago between two of the finest specimens of the tiger family in captivity, resulting in the death of the animal known throughout the United States as "Prince," the most ferocious tiger ever captured. It was three years ago, says a dispatch, that Prince was captured after mauling three hunters in the foot hills of the Himalayas mountains. He was the finest specimen ever caught. He was marked perfectly and weighed something like twelve hundred pounds. Since his arrival manager keeps the country over him visited the city to see him. A year ago a female, "Princess," was bought, but at that time "Prince" was considered so ferocious that they were not mated. In adjoining cages they got acquainted, and finally they were put together in a strong steel cage.

The tigers never showed any dislike for each other until a week previously when Prince began to punish Princess. She took his ill-treatment calmly, but when he began the wrangle she was ready. Prince struck the first blow and showed his long, white teeth. Princess laid her claws back and returned the blow and both began to hiss and growl. After walking around the cage with glaring eyes and lashing tails for several minutes, there was a sudden rush and the two came together in a life and death struggle. The ferocity and horror of which was intensified by the screams and shouts of the other members of the menagerie. They tore each other's backs and chewed each other's necks until the blood streamed from the long cruel gashes their sharp claws and teeth inflicted. Prince seemed to have the best of it, but after a hard struggle Princess broke away from him and backed away a few feet, leaping upon her adversary with the force of a catapult, knocking him upon his side and burying her claws and teeth in his shoulder. For half an hour the battle raged. The cage and its immediate vicinity looked like a slaughter-pen. Finally Princess set her teeth in a death-grip in her mate's neck and held him until she had torn his body from his head. Almost lifeless, she lay in the pond of blood for several minutes, and then raising herself let forth a terrible howl, as if cheering at victory.

When the noise ceased the keepers entered the building. Princess sat in her cage with one paw upon the dead Prince's head, which was nearly severed from his body. She was covered with blood and the remnants of her dead mate, but she stood victoriously over the greatest battle ever fought between dumb brutes.

## HISTORIC GOLD CUP.

The British Museum's Latest Acquisition—James I.'s Gift to a Spaniard.

James I. was a monarch always hard upon, but exceedingly lavish with other people's "bawbies." Although he was now happily been defunct for two centuries, says the London Telegraph, his generosity with goods not his own has, according to the report of the trustees of the British museum, just cost the country and several patriotic Englishmen the sum of £8,000. While he was king a panache was presented to England, a costly piece, and among the presents James awarded him was the royal gold cup, an exceedingly valuable vessel, fashioned in France in 1591 by command of the due de Berry, as a gift to his nephew, Charles VI.

It is supposed to have come to England in return for money lent to the French king Henry on his war, at all events it is found in the inventory of the royal chattels of Henry VI, and remained in the possession of the English court until James generously gave it away. It is a covered cup or chalice of gold, with ten subjects from the life of St. Agnes vividly portrayed in translucent enamel round the outside of the bowl and cover, with two medallions, also enamel, the one with another subject of St. Agnes, the other with a half length of the Saviour. On the lower part of the foot are the four evangelist symbols in enamel, and the base is formed of a cornet of leaves and pearls.

The Spaniard gave up the cup to a convent, where it remained until 1888, when the abess sold it to Baron Pichon.

of Paris, from whom the Messrs. Wertheimer purchased it for £3,000. The last named gentlemen agreed to let the British museum have it at cost price, and the late S. Wertheimer even subscribed £200 to enable them to acquire it. The treasury gave £3,800 and the remainder was made up by private subscription.

## ONE OF THE FAMILY.

A Street Scene That Would Have De-lighted the Late Henry Bergh.

It would have done the heart of the late Henry Bergh good if he had witnessed a scene at Thirty-fourth street and Third avenue the other day, says the New York Herald. Lying in the dirty black mud in the middle of the street was a dignified dog of the Newfoundland species. Standing over him in sorrow was an elegantly dressed young man.

"Come on, old man, get up. Get up, that's a good fellow," pleaded the young man, while the dog feebly moved his tail and rolled his eyes toward his master, but did not move. Then the youth acted. Dropping a book, which he carried, into the mud he stooped and lifted the mud-covered dog in his arms, and carried it to the sidewalk, depositing it by the side of a building. His clothes were bespattered, the bottom of his shirt and his cuffs were soiled, but he paid no attention to his appearance. He thanked an urchin who handed him the soiled book and then hailed a cab.

"You see, he's an old dog," he said to me apologetically, noting my interest in the episode. "He's one of my family, you know. I just brought him in from the country, and the rattling and jolting of the cars must have acted unfavorably upon his heart, because he gave out and fell right where you saw him. Poor old fellow!"

"Well, good dog, sir," and he again raised the animal carefully and deposited it in the cab which drew up. "Say some of dem dandies would give den dog de cold shake," commented a gamin as the cab rolled off.

## ODD FUNERAL CUSTOMS.

Duty of the Parish to Furnish an Umbrella for the Preacher.

In country districts in Wales a custom still exists of setting up a chest in the middle of the church at the time of a funeral, and before leaving the church the mourners all file round and put their offerings in. This is really intended for the clergyman's use, says the Westminster Review; but if the people are poor he often returns part of it (as a widow, for instance). There is at least one instance that was customary for the parish to provide an umbrella for the use of the clergyman on public occasions, more especially at funerals. The parish accounts of St. John's, Chester, contain the following entries:

1729 Paid Mr. George Marsh for an Umbrella for the parish use. 60 0 0  
1788 Paid for an Umbrella for Mr. Richardson to ride to the burial service under. 1 0 0

It was a general belief that if a corpse was carried over the fields on the way to burial it established a public right of way forever; hence it became customary when for convenience, or in some cases out of necessity, a corpse was taken across fields or over any private grounds, for the undertaker to stick a number of pins in each grave as the procession went through. The pins were accepted by the owner of the land as a payment for the privilege of the corpse being carried through, and an acknowledgment that the right of way was granted only for the particular occasion.

## A Dog's Fast Run.

Albert Gleason, of Woburn, owns a little fox terrier, which he has always thought a good deal, but which now values still more highly because of an exhibition of his pluck and faithfulness which the little animal recently gave. Mr. Gleason is the station agent at Woburn Highlands, and the other day he boarded the train there to go to Boston. He entered the last car and when the train arrived at Boston street he was surprised on looking back to see that the dog was following it and was only a short distance behind. As the train moved on the dog continued to follow at a most astonishing speed, and at Winchester he was only about two hundred feet behind. The distance between the two trains is one and three-quarter miles, and the little dog had covered it in less than four minutes.

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